



Council of Pharmacy Registering Authorities Inc

MEDIA RELEASE

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Revised recognition process for overseas trained pharmacists

The Council of Pharmacy Registering Authorities and the Australian Pharmacy Examining Council (APEC) have announced a revised recognition process for overseas trained pharmacists seeking registration in Australia.

APEC has been assessing the competencies of pharmacists seeking the right to practise in Australia for many years. However, pharmacists from the UK and Ireland have been exempt from that process under longstanding reciprocal arrangements between the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and state pharmacy registering authorities.

From 1 December 2006, all overseas trained pharmacists, irrespective of their country of origin, will be required to be assessed for competency to practise in Australia by undertaking a formal APEC process.

“The revised process is an equitable and efficient one”, the president of COPRA and deputy chair of APEC, Elizabeth Frost, said. “Recent events highlight that it is essential that the competency of every overseas qualified health professional is rigorously assessed before they are allowed to practise in Australia”.

A new modified process will be introduced for eligible holders of qualifications from the UK, Ireland, USA and Canada. This will be a shortened process involving a new examination to be known as the Competency Assessment of Overseas Pharmacists (CAOP), a minimum period of four weeks supervised practice in Australia and a national examination of pharmacy law and ethics. Pharmacists from other countries will continue to be assessed by the current process, which includes formal examinations, longer periods of supervised practice and a final assessment of competency.

The revised process will enhance existing national consistency in requirements for overseas trained pharmacists prior to registration. In addition to the national examination, it will include tighter controls over required periods of supervised practice.

All pharmacists seeking to practise in Australia will be required to establish their good standing in each jurisdiction in which they have been registered over the preceding ten years.

Mrs Frost said that the modified process could be extended to any pharmacist whose qualification was from a country which met criteria for comparability with Australia of pharmacy education accreditation, competency standards for registration, and pharmacy practice. Assessment of other countries and review of those qualifying for the modified process would be an on-going task.

New Zealand pharmacists will continue to be exempt from APEC requirements unless they require skills assessment for migration purposes. Their registration is facilitated via formal Trans Tasman mutual recognition arrangements. New Zealand's educational qualifications are closely linked to Australia's through shared accreditation requirements and practice standards are similar on both sides of the Tasman.

Further details are available from http://www.copra.org.au/pages/copra_news_issues.html.

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The Council of Pharmacy Registering Authorities (COPRA) was formed in 2002 as the national body of Australian State and Territory authorities responsible for the registration of pharmacists. The Pharmacy Council of New Zealand is an associate member. COPRA promotes consistency in standards of pharmaceutical education, registration and practice. It accredits pharmacy education providers and courses for registration purposes. COPRA is merging with the Australian Pharmacy Examining Council Inc and, from 1 December 2006, will be the authority responsible for assessment of the qualifications of overseas pharmacists for migration purposes.